Christmas Carols

"Good King Wenceslas" wasn't a king, but a duke. His brother Boleslaus "The Cruel" (wow) killed him and took over.

"O Tannenbaum" - "The German lyrics just mean "O Fir Tree" and don't really have to do with Christmas.

"Carol of the Bells" also really isn't about Christmas, but is a Ukrainian song based on a folktale about Spring coming.

"The Wassail Song" is about kids going door to door and getting progressively hammered.

"Sleigh Ride" is better without the lyrics, which weren't added until four years later.

"The Nutcracker" (My favorite Christmas music) is based on a book that's a lot darker and more ambiguously written.

hot take:

The Nintendo 64 aged terribly, and nowadays has little to recommend that hasn't already been remade for better systems.

As far as I'm concerned, there are maybe 5-7 N64 games worth playing that remain exclusive to that system, and even nostalgia can't make those look good thanks to the hardware's limitations. (Well, maybe F-Zero X is an exception.)

- Sin and Punishment
- Rogue Squadron
- Paper Mario
- F-Zero X
- Blast Corps, maybe?

And I would say the same thing about the Atari 2600.

"'Cause it's a long road
to wisdom,
But it's a short one to
being ignored."

-The Lumineers,
"Flowers In
Your Hair"

Thomas Vose CC-BY-NC 12/2/2023
tvose@hotmail.com

Duesenberg as a company died back in 1937, a victim of the Depression. In their heyday, though, they made possibly the raddest cars on Earth.

Like the Model J, for instance, which was powerful (special models hit 400 hp) ridiculously good looking and very, very expensive - the surviving ones still arise. Good luck finding a real one for under $1 million.

And, of course, it's the source of the phrase - "It's a doozy!"

Back in the day, my favorite Transformer was Wreck-Gar, leader of the Junkions, who had a sweet axe, an awesome motorcycle form, and the dulcet tones of Eric Idle saying hilariously random shit (in the movie, later replaced by Weird Al in a stroke of further inspired casting).

I actually owned the toy briefly. It was stolen at summer camp, destroying forever my view of humanity.

(For a week, at least)

Wreck-Gar, I barely knew ye.

The current received wisdom in advertising is that billboards with a big dumb face on it generate more interest than those without. And in a personal business like law, that makes a certain level of sense. I always thought it was just sheer egotism. It's probably both.

There are actually four states where billboards are banned - Maine, Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii. You also have to ask yourself - "is there a reason this particular billboard is here?" "Is this an area with a lot of car wrecks?"

As far as I'm concerned, the "grade level" model in schools is obsolete, and clinging to it a detriment to learners.

The pressure is to pass kids through for social reasons, but they then lag educationally, which has repercussions for their self-esteem as well.

What if, instead, we did away with it?

In its place, kids would be placed in subject-specific classes based on their competency, without regard for age, and continue to be met at the level they're at.

An 8-year old could excel in math, being placed in a class with 10-11 year olds, but she might lag in history and need to stay at a lower level there. She would not be in "third grade," but Math 5, History 2, Reading 3 - and could even mentor younger kids there.

You Should READ:

"The nameless man, the zombie priest, had come to town to build a gang from the undead. But even the undead fear →

A graphic novel series, recently revitalized, The Goon is absolutely unique as a mix of pathos, batshit lunacy, tragedy, gruesome horror, Popeye-esque brawling, and everything in between. The original run is the story of Goon's mob wrestling control of the city from the horrors of the Zombie Priest with digressions in Uncle Ned fights a gold-covered mad scientist, a wicker man, bog lurks, the Communist Airborne Mollusc Mithra, and a rival gang leader with his hand stuck in a bowling ball.

Cats I have Known: CLEO

At the time, I lived in a place with carpeted open stairs. She would bat at me from them like this.

She could also climb all the way around a stair, clinging upside-down to its carpeted underside.

Tajikistan

Everywhere has a story

Their flag has a crown and "lucky seven" stars.

Almost entirely Muslim!

Historically passed from one empire to another - Persia, Umayyads, China, USSR

Uzbekistan (don't like each other)

Kyrgyzstan (right over border)

Very poor!

Has a really long, scary tunnel right here! It's the only road between North and South!

China (get along, China trying to draw them into orbit)

Oshi palav - a pilaf dish with major social connection connotations!

Ancient Silk Road ruins!

Dushanbe

Usoi Dam

Very cool national park with glacius in the east!

Afghanistan (a tough neighbor)

This dam was caused by a landslide in 1911 - and they're worried it could collapse anytime.

Independence brought civil war and single-party rule.

The current leader, Emomali Rahmon, has been there since 1994, and is grooming his son to take over.

Their highest point used to be known as "Communism Peak." (They changed it.)

long ago
i used to work at a pizza p(a)lace.
ance
a drunk guy
attacked my friend in the bathroom
and we had to call the fuzz
they
surrounded the place and made us all
come out
at gunpoint
(bit of an overreaction it seems)

the boss
made my friend clean up his own blood
from the bathroom tile
before going home.

he died a few years back
gone but not forgotten

(asshole)

You SHOULD ~~PLAY~~ REMAKE

First off, it's not about drugs. It's a Japan-only PlayStation 1 game-
-subtitled "Dream Emulator."
-Basically, they took a guy's dream diary and made it an interactive experience. It is, as you might expect, very surreal.
It gets a bit repetitive at times, reusing the same locations over and over - but it adds new wrinkles each time. The controls are clunky and the graphics dated, but the imagination is undeniable.
Imagine a procedurally generated new game about exploring dreams, powered by AI that could spin up anything...

A pub

is, of course, short for "public house"

Think about what that originally meant, though.

Nowadays there are licenses and standards, but long ago it was just somebody's house, where you hung out by their fire and bought the beer they brewed and whatever meal they cooked for people.
There's a certain conviviality to that.

Organ grinders were not just a lazy stereotype for old timey cartoons- they were very real street performers who made their living using this - the barrel organ.

Turning the crank engages a bellows that forces air through it - and also rotates the big barrel inside. The pins on the barrel push levers that channel air into the right pipes to play the song. The barrels had multiple songs encoded on them you could toggle between.

And why a monkey? They're cute, attract attention, and can hold a cup. You're busy cranking, remember.